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Russia, United States salute in Earth orbit

The world was treated to a special treat Monday as the U.S. space shuttle Discovery and the Russian space station Mir traveled within 37 feet of one another in orbit.

Sadly, few people will pay attention to or care about the awesome spectacle of two 100-ton manmade vehicles gracefully sliding by one another in the cold vacuum of space. The grandeur of the event will be lost on those who have completely lost their sense of wonder.

The coupling almost didn't happen. Problems with Discovery's fuel tanks led Moscow to almost cancel the approach altogether.

It did happen, and the most amazing facet of it all is barely distinguishable for members of our generation.

Americans were treated to a similar, though even more daring, feat in 1969 when Americans first set foot on the moon. One of the primary motivators then, however, was a competition to do it first — before the Soviet Union was able to accomplish the mission.

Now, 26 years later, the Soviet Union is gone and the United States is actually collaborating with the Russians on a venture that serves as a testament to man's achievements, regardless of nationality.

The fly-by would have been unheard of 30 years ago. Today, people hardly notice amid demands of cutting the space budget. Events such as those of Monday's Discovery mission should put those demands to rest.

"It's like a fairy tale," the Russian commander said. He's right. The best, one must hope, is still to come.

Girls play games to gather guys



CASSIE STURKIE
Columnist

Although last week I was down and out over my befuddled attempts at trying to date again, I think I may be getting back into the swing of things. You see, my problem was that I had been trying to rationalize this new dating experience. Somehow I had forgotten the most basic rule of dating: It's only a game. Lucky for me, I love games. Now I just have to re-learn the game, college-style. Since my friends are tried-and-true players, I decided to ask them for advice.

Although girls insist that guys play more games than they do, I just don't believe it. Guys could be never be as creative or as conniving as the sneaky girls I talked to.

The earliest stage in the game is when you are getting to know the guy. You may have spotted him across the tables in the Grand Marketplace, you may have noticed him at a party, or you may have heard about his bad reputation. It doesn't matter — you know you're interested. At this stage, you'll casually say to one of his friends, "So... tell me about that guy you were standing next to the other night — what's he like?"

You say just enough to show a hint of interest, but never enough so that you look like you actually care. He will eventually hear from someone that you were asking about him. If he is interested, he will feed a question back through the same source. Now the game is on.

As your interest in this guy progresses, so does your level of risk. It's no longer enough just to ask about him; now you want to see for yourself what he is up to. At this stage, you may consider doing a "drive-by," also known as a "fly-by." This is where you literally drive by the side of his dorm room or the front of his apartment to see if his car is there, if his lights are on and if there are any scantily-clad girls in his room with him. If you continue to drive by several times or drive slower than 25 mph to get a really good look, you are definitely stalking him. I even had a few girls admit to calling a guy and then hanging up right after he answered. I would have to consider this stalk-

ing, too.

Another game where the car is of the utmost importance is the parking garage game. This is where you deliberately park your car next to his, so the next time he leaves, he will see your car and naturally start fantasizing about you. Right.

Once you and the guy are hanging out, the mind games begin. This is where control is the name of the game.

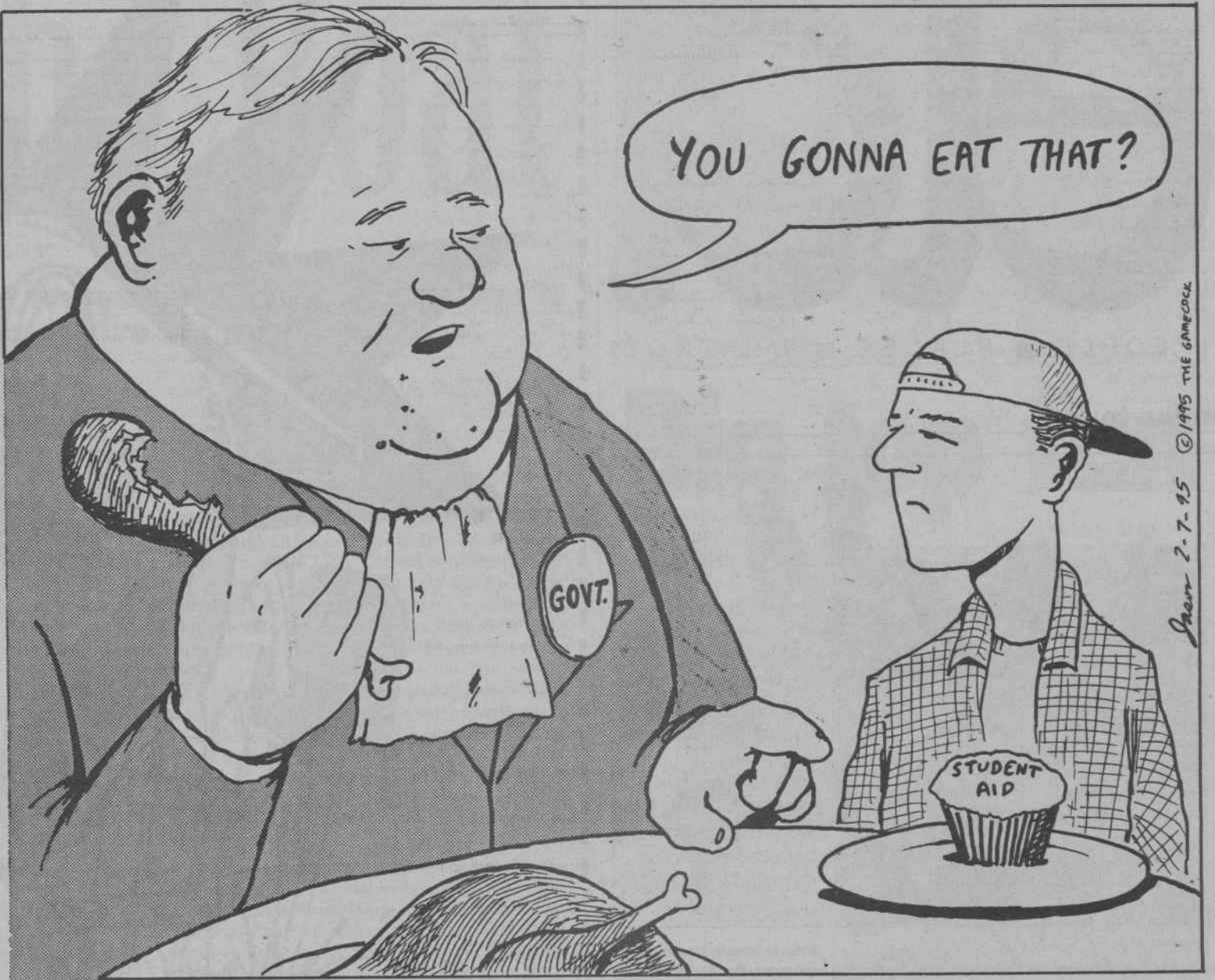
The ultimate lesson in control is to act like you don't care about the guy. My friend Alexis told me to always get off the phone first, before the guy does. That way, she explains, you retain control. If you think the guy will be calling you, it's a good idea to talk to your friends on the phone all night. When he calls, you can click over and act like you are talking to another guy on the other line. Subtle, but challenging. Guys love that.

The worst thing to do with a guy is to act clingy. Guys would much rather chase after a girl who plays games. That way, guys feel safe from any sort of commitment. Girls tell me that they appear at places where they know guys will be. Of course, they never let on that they know the guys will be there. Girls either talk loudly with their friends or talk to the guy's friends. But they never talk directly to the guy.

Although I am not totally sure why girls play these games, I think it has something to do with the fact that we are gatherers. We used to gather berries, and now we gather men. It's as simple as that. We like to keep our options open, and playing games with guys is the best way to do this.

I apologize in advance to all the girls whose games I have revealed. As soon as I do some field research on the games that guys play, I'll be sure to settle the score.

Cassie Sturkie is a senior in the Honors College.



John DeBatts © 1995 THE GAMECOCK

QUOTE UNQUOTE

"We feel the American public has been very alienated from the Congress."

Rep. John Kasich
R-Ohio

Cumulative voting doesn't add up

Here at the Mean-Spirited, Right-Wing Division of the editorial page, our staff spends countless hours seeking out topics worthy of your interest. But sometimes we spend so much space discussing national issues that we blind ourselves to the stupidity that takes place in our own community. Therefore, this column is devoted to finding the most ridiculous waste of our tuition money and poking fun at it.

There are so many organizations deserving of ridicule that it's difficult to narrow it down to just one. Student Government is out, as it might actually succeed in naming the Coliseum after Frank McGuire. The USC law school is also out. Even though its "grade cleansing" policy is inane enough to deserve mention, I still need to graduate. The Law Democrats, normally fine fodder for this segment, have been missing since early November and were last spotted on the side of a carton of Peeler's milk. It is also passe to make fun of our campus food services, since people who actually dine there do so at their own risk.

Finally, we have the Office of Parking and Vehicle Registration Services (motto: "We paved paradise and took out your parking lots.") But these public servants will always be with us, coasting into their half-empty, newly created faculty and staff spaces, and they'll be first against the wall when the revolution comes. No, this week's spotlight shines on our good friends at the USC College of Business Administration's Division of Research, whose questionnaire about Richland County elections had the supreme misfortune of landing in my mailbox. For those of you who did not receive a copy, here's a brief synopsis of the salient



PAT MCNEILL
Columnist

points:

1. Currently, elections for Richland County Council are done by the district method, with one council member elected from each district.
2. Under the Voting Rights Act, special majority-black districts have been drawn up to ensure that African-Americans have a greater opportunity to elect Council members.
3. Each eligible Richland County voter currently receives one vote.
4. This is a bad thing because:
 - a. The African-American voters in Richland County are still outnumbered by "a majority of non-black voters" hereinafter referred to as "The Man."
 - b. African-Americans are therefore under-represented if they happen to live in the same district as The Man.
 - c. Those African-Americans who do have seats on the Council are still outvoted by Council members selected by The Man.
5. The proposed Cumulative Voting Method will destroy the districts and give each voter 11 votes, one for each Council seat. They may divide these votes up however they choose. This method will "give voting strengths to all members of all minority groups," eliminating that worrisome "one person, one vote" system that has been in effect for generations.

6. Under cumulative voting, minority voters will now have the ability "to pool their votes in support of a candidate" in an at-large election. (Note: No mention is made in this survey that the Cumulative Method will also give The Man 11 votes apiece, thus ensuring African-Americans remain a permanent minority on the council.)

7. Please select the method of voting you would prefer. Remember that even though we have just spent a page and a half listing the drawbacks of the district method and the advantages of the cumulative method, "there are no right or wrong answers."

A closer inspection of the survey reveals that it was commissioned by our friends at the Richland County Council, run by Democrat Kit "I was caught personally ripping down my opponent's campaign signs because, ah, ... (mumble)... zoning ordinance" Smith. It seems that Ms. Smith's crew is worried about its slipping 6-5 majority and is looking for more ingenious ways of holding onto it. I am guessing that the Democrats would also like an at-large election so they can escape appearing on the ballot with the word "Democrat" after their names.

While I am cynical about cumulative voting actually helping any minority voters, I would like to see it become a national trend. Then, in the next congressional election, I can cast one vote for Floyd Spence and give my remaining 434 votes to Newt Gingrich. Whoever said that one person can't make a difference in America?

Pat McNeill is a third-year law student.

'Dactyl Nightmare' virtual trip to video graveyard

Death comes quickly in virtual reality

There aren't many things in this cruel life that can match the sheer joy of finding an empty parking space with a whole hour left on the meter. Except maybe for lining up all those responsible for the Pringles commercials and riddling them with semiautomatic rifle fire.

Then, of course, there's the feeling you get when your doctor tells you that you don't need surgery for your hemorrhoids... it's like you're walking on air, folks.

But as I was saying, when I found the parking space with the Golden Meter, I knew that it was going to be my lucky day. That lasted for all of five minutes.

I thought that I'd try my hand at the Virtual Reality Fest-O-Rama in the Russell House. The game turned out to be a one-on-one fight to the death, Roman-style, that took place in some freaky staircase arena that defied space and time. I think my Virtual Reality persona must have been a conscientious objector because I got waxed, three kills to one.

All in all, it was a fairly interesting experience. One thing struck me as being rather peculiar for a video game, though. Now, throughout the game you see the action through your "virtual" eyes, but whenever you take an exploding round in the lips, you're suddenly floating above watching yourself diffuse into bite-size chunks.

It was some kind of Virtual Reality out-of-body experience, like those people who "see" themselves on the operating table or something. It really made the hair on the back of my neck stand on end (almost blinding the guy behind me).

Anyway, a little footnote to the Virtual Reality thing: During the game there is a huge, fire-breath-



MATT HORGAN
Columnist

ing Pterodactyl flying around trying to give you a big hug. Because of this, the game designers, in a flash of brilliance, named their virtual baby "Dactyl Nightmare!"

Well, I took the liberty of looking up "dactyl" in the American Heritage dictionary (third edition) and it read, and I quote, "a metrical foot consisting of one accented syllable followed by two unaccented ones."

Now, I don't rightly recall any point in the game where I was attacked by snarling packs of blood-thirsty iambic pentameter. In fact, I'm quite certain that there was no literature involved. So as you can see, there is a discrepancy between what the name implies and what the game actually delivers.

I'm hoping there is some money to be made by bringing suit against the company for fraud.

Movin' right along, I imagine that a few of you out there attended Friday's rally to talk about the financial aid cuts in front of the Russell House.

I meandered onto the scene a little before it was scheduled to begin, and horror of horrors, I heard "Ice, Ice Baby" by Vanilla Ice blasting out of the P.A. Folks, when you have a rally, you want to attract people, not drive them away screaming, fer chrissakes.

I sincerely hope that whomever was responsible for this realizes that they perpetrated a major musical faux pas, the likes of which we haven't seen

since Captain and Tenille's "Muskrat Love" was a hit in the late '70s. And Vanilla Ice, boy howdy don't get me started.

Where the hell is he now? I sure thought his film career was gonna take off after "Cool as Ice" ... but then, I've never been that great a judge of no-talents.

Though, I must say Paula Abdul did quite well for herself, what with the music videos and all. It's been widely documented, however, that her due with M.C. Skat Kat was the beginning of the end (which goes along with my theory that the addition of Scrappy-Doo was the major cause in the demise of Scooby-Doo).

While we're on the subject of crap, the circus was in town this weekend ... as if you couldn't feel the excitement in the air.

Oh sure, I bet you think the circus is all glitz and glamour, fast cars and even faster women. Well, it's not; there's a dark side to the circus that your average Joe never sees.

The long hours, the strenuous work, inadequate dental coverage, cotton candy for breakfast, lunch and dinner, the screams of caged animals in the middle of the night, drunk clowns throwing up in your sink... that, my friends is the real circus.

And I should know, because I lived it (let's just say I have a bad home life).

That's it for this week, folks. Take care and don't let the bed bugs bite (quick tip: They go for the real meaty areas like the abdomen and the buttocks but if you coat yourself in Crisco at bedtime, they pincers can't grip).

Toodles.

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